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MISCELLANY

A

TWO INTERESTING COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MOST REVEREND ARCHBISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

1.

THE REVEREND ANTHONY PENCO, C.M.

While strolling through the galleries or cloisters of the magnificent Campo Santo (cemetery) of Genoa, Italy, in 1908, my curiosity was aroused by noticing on one of the monuments there what seemed to be the outlines of a geographical map. My surprise increased when, on closer examination, I read the words *Carta dell' America del Nord* (Map of North America), and beheld the course of old Father Mississippi with a black spot marked *San Luigi* (St. Louis). Equally astonishing to me was the inscription engraved on the marble slab. It read:

M. PENCO, C.M.

Come nel mondo con le opere e colla preghiera, così nel
cielo fra gli inni dei Santi nella visione di Dio penso
et benedico alla mia famiglia

D. Antonio di Giovanni Baptista Penco e di Anna Prefumo.

Nato in Genova, 23 Ottobre, 1813,

Morto in S. Ilario Ligure, 10 Ottobre, 1875.

Solerte Missionario in America. In patria
degno sacerdote, qual padre in famiglia.

This may be translated as follows:

"M. Penco, of the Congregation of the Mission.

As (were) in this world my works and prayers, so now

in heaven among the hymns of the Saints in the

vision of God are my thoughts and blessings, for my family.

D. Anthony (son), of John Baptist Penco and Anna Prefumo.

Born in Genoa, Oct. 23, 1813;

Died in S. Ilario Ligure, Oct. 10, 1875.

A zealous missionary in America. In his native country
a worthy priest, as he was a true father to his family."

I then and there made up my mind that, upon my return to America, I would find out who was this Rev. Anthony Penco, missionary in St. Louis. But I forgot until a few days ago, when I came across the notice again in the memoranda which I had made in Genoa eight years ago. Here is what I found:

Father Penco's name first occurs in the *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* of 1842 in the following notice found on page 81: "Theological Seminary of St. Charles

Borromeo, Philadelphia. The institution is at present under the immediate direction of the Lazarists or priests of the Congregation of the Mission. Number of students, 33. Rev. Mariano Maler, C.M., *President*; Rev. Anthony Penco, C.M., *Prefect*; Rev. Thomas Burke, C.M., *Professor of Philosophy*." The Lazarist Fathers were brought there by Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick in 1841. (SHEA, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, Vol. iii, p. 568.) The same *Almanac* for 1843 has the following (p. 115): "Ecclesiastical Seminary at Rose Hill, Westchester County, New York. Number of students, 31. The institution is under the care of Rev. Anthony Penco and Chas. A. Roadte, priests of the Congregation of the Mission." This was St. Joseph's Seminary opened at Fordham, by Bishop Hughes in 1841, under the presidency of Rev. Felix Villanis, D.D., C.M. "In 1842, Father Villanis was replaced by Father Anthony Penco, C.M., who remained at the head of the Seminary during 1842, 1843, and 1844." (GABRIELS, *Historical Sketch of St. Joseph's Provincial Seminary, Troy, N. Y.*, in the *United States Catholic Historical Society*, Monograph Series, No. 3, 1905, p. 23.) The reason why the Lazarists did not stay longer at Fordham as stated by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. x, p. 367) was because "Father Anthony Penco, who was made superior, did not approve of the seminarians teaching in the college, so the community retired from the work." At the Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1843, Father Penco was the theologian of Bishop Hughes of New York.¹

In the *Catholic Almanacs* of 1846 and 1851 we find Father Penco as President of the Lazarist College at Cape Girardeau, near St. Louis, which rose to a flourishing condition under his care. (SHEA, *l. c.*, Vol. iv, p. 218.) In the *Almanacs* of 1852, '53 and '54, Father Penco figures as pastor of the Church of St. Vincent de Paul, in St. Louis. At the same time he was Visitor of the Lazarist

¹ It is not without interest to know that Reverend A. Penco, C.M., was the deacon at the Pontifical High Mass, when Bishop Hughes, on Sunday, March 10, 1844, in the Cathedral of New York, consecrated the three newly-appointed Bishops Byrne of Little Rock, Quarter of Chicago, and his own Coadjutor McCloskey of New York, with the assistance of Bishops Fenwick of Boston and Whelan of Richmond. This day in the year 1844, just fifty-four years after Bishop Carroll's consecration (August 15, 1790), when there were only seventeen Dioceses and Bishops in the country, was assuredly as memorable and important an occasion, if not more so, as the one when Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul nearly seventy years later, when there were already some ninety-three Dioceses in the land, consecrated on May 19, 1910, six Bishops for the Northwest, namely Bishops Busch, Corbett, Heffron, Lawler, O'Reilly, and Wehrle, O.S.B. One week later, Sunday, March 17, 1844, Bishop Fenwick, assisted by Bishop Whelan and Bishop Byrne (the latter consecrated on the previous Sunday), consecrated in the Cathedral of Baltimore Bishop Tyler of Hartford. Two days later, March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, Bishop Purcell, assisted by Bishop Miles of Nashville and Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh, consecrated in the Cathedral of Cincinnati Bishop Henni of Milwaukee and Bishop Reynolds of Charleston. The next Sunday, March 24, Bishop Fenwick again assisted by Bishop Whelan and Bishop Tyler, also consecrated by him the Sunday before, consecrated at Georgetown his Coadjutor, Bishop Fitzpatrick. It is truly a striking fact that these were all and the only episcopal consecrations in the United States during the year 1844, and all within the two weeks centering around the feast of St. Joseph.

houses in America from 1850-1855. Father Penco left America and returned to Italy in 1855. Bishop Ryan of Buffalo, himself a Lazarist Father, in an interesting article on *Early Lazarist Missions and Missionaries* (*United States Catholic Historical Magazine*, Vol. i (1887), p. 383), in explaining that the appointment of the Reverend Mariano Maler as Visitor of the Lazarists in Brazil had been quite a blow to their community here, says: "But now comes another blow, and not a light one. The Visitor, Mr. Penco, was called to Europe in June, 1855, and Mr. Masnau was appointed Pro-Visitor. Mr. Penco was one of nature's noble men; his appearance and manner indicated his gentle character; his presence at the altar evidenced the saintly priest. His family was one of the wealthiest in Genoa, but by extravagant speculations his brother wrecked his princely fortune and at his death left his family destitute. Mr. Penco was able to save his own patrimony from the general wreck, and educate his brother's children. To this he devoted himself during the remainder of his life, acting at the same time as chief Director of the missionary college Brignole-Sale in his native city, Genoa." This explains the somewhat puzzling words of the inscription on his tombstone, "qual padre in familia."

Archbishop Corrigan, in a biographic sketch of Rev. Penco says: "He had always entertained a very warm interest in the Church of the United States, and when he returned to Europe, continued to promote its welfare, especially by training good missionaries for America." (*United States Catholic Historical Society's Historical Records and Studies*, Vol. iii, Pt. ii (1904), p. 290.) Who were the missionaries in the United States who came from the Brignole-Sale in the period of 1855-1875, the year when Father Penco died? My former Bishop, Right Rev. Winand Wigger, D.D., of Newark, N. J., was a student of that college where he was ordained priest in 1865.

When I shall enjoy again the beauty of that Campo Santo in Genoa, I will not fail to look for the grave and pray for the eternal rest of this zealous American missionary, Rev. Anthony Penco.

2

AMERICAN ITEMS FROM AN OLD AUSTRIAN CATHOLIC PERIODICAL

By pure but lucky chance I have just come across some stray volumes of an old German periodical, published in the 'forties at Innsbruck, Tirol, Austria—*Katholische Blaetter aus Tirol*. Curiosity made me peep into them, and I found a great deal of interesting and partly original historical material regarding Catholic missions in our country.

The first volume, published in 1843, contains a long series of articles entitled: *Something about the Catholic Church in the United States of America*, written, as the editor states in a footnote (p. 509) "by a man who has worked for several years as a missionary in America and has personally experienced and observed what he tells. He acquaints us not only with the religious and moral conditions of the people, but gives us much wider observations to show what a large field awaits the labors of the missionary there."

In the first article (p. 475), the writer gives a general survey of the conditions of American Catholics. Then he speaks of the population in general, dividing

it into Indians, Americans and Immigrants. Of the Indians he writes, on pp. 509ss., 527ss., and touches also upon the Jesuit missions among them. Of the Americans he writes, on pp. 574ss., 589ss., and concludes: "The Americans are a highly educated nation, a people fervently religious; fanatical Protestants as they are, they become just as enthusiastic Catholics once they have embraced the truth. The government leaves religion alone, although it does so merely for the sake of common peace and not to give preference to any sect." On pp. 606ss., 621ss., he speaks of the Immigrants, especially of the Germans of whom he makes many a remark, little complimentary, but unfortunately true. Pages 637ss. treat of the Negroes, about whom he says: "The Catholic Church has, as far as its influence goes, greatly softened the condition of the slaves. Catholics may buy, but not sell slaves; they must treat them humanely and care for their eternal and temporal welfare; otherwise they will be barred from the sacraments." Is this statement true? On pp. 668ss., he speaks of the administration of Church property, and on pp. 753ss., on the Church revenues. He concludes by saying: "Foundations, tithes, land-rents, and patronages are unknown in America. Pew-rent, collections and other voluntary contributions are the only revenues of the churches; with these all must be supported, even the bishops. The Rt. Rev. Bishop of Philadelphia has lately begun to give the places in the churches free and to take up purely voluntary contributions only. But whether his attempt, though most desirable, has succeeded, the writer does not know."

The same writer contributes another article to this same volume of the *Katholische Blaetter aus Tirol* (pp. 648ss.), which tells of a very important discussion which had taken place in the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore, held on May 17-24, 1840, but of which not a word is mentioned in the published Acts of the Council. The writer states that some American Bishops considered the proposition of having an American Seminary established in Germany where German ecclesiastical students were to be trained for the Missions in America. (This was many years before the American Colleges of Rome and Louvain were thought of.) Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati proposed the matter in the Council. The Promoters of the Council (Bishops Rosati of St. Louis and Fenwick of Boston) appointed a committee from the assembled theologians, who were to consider the project most carefully and to report their conclusions at one of the public sessions of the Bishops. "In order that all should be done with due attention and deliberation, the committee was constituted of men who felt great concern for the German Catholics, namely the Very Rev. Dr. Deluol, Superior of the Sulpicians and Vicar General of Baltimore, two German priests and myself."²

The text then continues: "We all agreed that the erection in Germany of such a Seminary for America would not be advisable, especially for the following

² Who is this "myself"? There were only three German priests at this Council, the Very Rev. Joseph Prost, Superior of the Redemptorists, the Rev. Joseph Ant. Lutz, Secretary of Bishop Rosati, and the Rev. Benedict Bayer, C.S.S.R., who was theologian for Bishop Miles of Nashville. In an editorial note we learn (p. 648) that the writer of this article is the same *former* American missionary who wrote the

reasons." These reasons the writer goes on to explain in a lengthy, but, even today, very interesting disquisition full of most pertinent and shrewd observations (pp. 649-652). *Query*: was it this discussion held at the Baltimore Council in 1840 which suggested to the Very Reverend J. M. Henni, Vicar General of Cincinnati, in 1843, the idea of establishing there a Seminary for the education of German priests? (*See below.*) This whole series of highly interesting articles comprises about forty pages in small German type. An English translation in our usual American form would make a volume of fully one hundred pages.

In these volumes of the *Katholische Blaetter aus Tirol* I found another series of equally interesting articles, or rather letters, which are particularly important for the history of the German missions in the States of New York and Wisconsin. They are the letters of the Rev. Adalbert Inama, Canon Regular of the Premonstratensian Convent of Wilten at Innsbruck, Tirol. I am very sorry to say that in our Seminary Library at St. Francis, Wis., we have only the years 1843, '44, '45, '46 and '48. Even these are not complete, since in vol. 1843, pp. 273-353, and in vol. 1848, pp. 681-1289, are missing. I wonder if a complete set of this valuable periodical is anywhere hidden away in some Benedictine or Redemptorist library in the United States. The volumes at our seminary contain 25 letters of Father Inama and one of his fellow-canon, Father Maximilian Gaertner. These letters are found in vol. 1843 on pp. 43, 267, 415, 440, 538, 545, 679, 765, 785; in vol. 1844 on pp. 185, 897; in vol. 1845 on pp. 38, 401, 430, 447; in vol. 1845 on p. 881, 906, 996; in vol. 1846 on pp. 158, 260, 490; in vol. 1846 on pp. 693, 813, 1089 (Gaertner); in vol. 1848 on pp. 276, 676. The entire series covers nearly ninety pages in small type, which would make in English a volume of some two hundred pages.

Rev. Inama's first letter is dated Paris, December 27, 1842. In it we learn that a certain Father Brassac in Paris was appointed Vicar General of the American Bishops for all European missionaries who were desirous of coming to the American missions. He also tells us that his next neighbor in the *Pension* where they stopped at Paris, was the Secretary of Bishop Rosati of St. Louis, "papal delegate for negotiating and concluding a concordat with the Republic at Hayti." The second letter is dated New York, March 13, 1843, and described the sea voyage and his visits to Rev. Rumpfer, C.S.S.R., in New York; Revs.

above-mentioned series on the Catholic Church in America. Consequently he must have been back in Europe in 1843. Consulting the old *Directories*, I find that Revs. Bayer and Lutz were still in America in 1844 and 1845. But the last notice I find of Father Prost is that of his being pastor of the German church in Utica, N. Y. in 1842; after that, his name appears no more. This would seem to point him out as the writer of this very interesting paper. Archbishop Corrigan (*U. S. Cath. Hist. Socy., Records and Studies*, Vol. ii., Pt. ii., p. 250f.) gives a short sketch of the very interesting missionary work of Rev. Prost in the United States from 1835, when he arrived, till 1843, when he returned to Austria. It is curious, by the way, to notice in these old *Directories* the manner of indicating the religious community to which Father Prost belonged. Now it is S.S.L. (Soc. S. Liguori), then O.S.L. (Ord. S. Liguori), the last C.S.R. (only one S). The former two are probably derived from the German appellation *Ligorianor* often given to the Redemptorists in Austria and Switzerland.

Raffener in Williamsburgh (now Brooklyn); Rev. Kunze, O.S.F., in Bloomingdale (?), and Rev. Balleis, O.S.B., in Newark, N. J. Inama's next letter, dated New York, April 5th, is quite amusing, showing that he had already "caught on" to the old and ever new trick of American land owners. He says that Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati invites him to start a mission in Wilksville County, where a land owner offers 2000 acres free if the priest will settle there. But he says "that's only a speculation—the land owner thereby draws a large number of Catholic settlers by which the land, up to now worthless, rises immensely in price and thus the donor gets rich by his gift. But the donee also gains, for the Catholics gain—a priest." In the other letters, Inama describes the parish at Williamsburgh, and his journey to Albany, Schenectady, and Utica. Here he was to take charge of the German congregation. His letter from Utica, September 11, 1843, contains the following interesting notice: "Only lately the Very Rev. Dr. Henni, Vicar General of the Bishop of Cincinnati, wrote to me, whom he does not know at all, that he expects me most ardently; that he desires to establish a German Catholic Seminary for the United States, and that for this purpose he has already purchased a roomy building with a large garden contiguous to the new parish church; that the Council of Baltimore, however, wants a religious community to take charge of it. Therefore he thinks it is God's providence bringing me here to realize this favorite project. I answered at once that I could never do it, and that I had no such permission or commission. However, I would come there this fall and discuss the matter with him." Mention is also made of Inama's missions in Syracuse, Salina and Constableville. Another letter from Utica, October 6, 1845, has an interesting report of the struggle for religious liberty in the Central Insane Asylum, a State institution, where some Catholic female employes had been dismissed because they refused to attend the Protestant service. The letters from Salina during 1845 describe his journey in the fall of 1844 to St. Louis by way of Auburn, Geneva, Buffalo, Makinaw, Milwaukee, Chicago and Sac Prairie, Wis., where he met for the first time the family of the Hungarian Count Haraszthy, a former General in the Austrian army, who had settled on a large tract of land at Sac Prairie. The letter dated Manlius, September 6, 1845, furnishes a copy of the letter from Count Haraszthy, offering one hundred acres of land free on condition that the children of Sac Prairie have a free school, and of a letter from Bishop Henni urging Inama to come and take charge of the mission. Inama's first letter from Sac Prairie shows that he was much enchanted by what he saw; he writes: "I say without hesitation that few regions can surpass Sac Prairie in fertility of soil, variety and romantic beauty of scenery, and healthfulness of climate. Wood and water, stone and clay, lime and sand, everything needed for building, are at hand in plenty." His letters in January and February tell of his mission work at Sac Prairie. But only in the letter, dated March 29, 1846, does he continue the story of his journey to St. Louis in 1844 from Sac Prairie to Mineral Point, Galena, Dubuque (where he visited Father Mazzucchelli, the Italian Dominican and founder of Sinsinawa, Wis.), Navoo, "the new Jerusalem of the Mormons," and St. Louis, where he arrived October 14, 1844. The continuation of this story and the promised visit to Vicar General Henni at Cincinnati are probably contained in the volume for 1847 which is missing here. On pp. 1089ss. of the

volume for 1846, Father Gaertner tells of his sea voyage from Havre to New York. The letter of January 12, 1848, is signed by both, Inama and Gaertner, and gives a full and detailed description of their missionary labors. It also tells of an unexpected visit from an Indian chief of the Winnebago tribe, who turned out to be a Frenchman born at Bordeaux. He came to Canada where he settled down. After the death of his wife he married a young Indian squaw and settled on the Barakoo (Baraboo?) River which empties into the Wisconsin River. Mention is also made of Bishop Henni's intended journey to Europe and of the erection of the new Cathedral at Milwaukee. In the next letter, dated Sac Prairie, April 21, 1848, Father Gaertner refers to Henni's departure from New York, February 23, on the steamer *Washington*, and tells of the fear entertained for his safety in Europe on account of the revolution. However, a note of the editor (p. 680) states that Bishop Henni arrived from Italy in St. Gall on June 14, where he was expected to hold the Corpus Christi procession.³

Whether the volumes of the *Katholische Blaetter aus Tirol* after 1848 contain any more letters of Father Inama and Gaertner, I do not know. In all probability they do, and it would be worth while to look them up. In the volumes here there are quite a number of other interesting items of Catholic American history. I mention in particular a letter of Rev. Francis Pierz, a companion of Bishop Baraga, dated Arbre Croche, Michigan, March 2, 1843. There are other letters by Father Unterthiner, O.S.F., dated Cincinnati, May 9 and October 29, 1845; by Rev. Caspar Rehrl, pioneer missionary of Wisconsin, dated Calumet Village, Wis., November 5, 1845; by the Rev. Dr. Salzmann, dated Milwaukee, October 9, 1847, telling of his arrival in Baltimore and Milwaukee.

The foregoing pages may serve as a sample of the rich and interesting material bearing on our Catholic American history, which can be gathered from the volumes of Catholic periodicals published in Germany and Austria, at a time when Catholics began to emigrate to the United States, and when German missionaries here were obliged to appeal for help and assistance from the Catholics of the Fatherland.

Milwaukee, April, 1916.

✱ S. G. MESSMER.

B

FATHER NASH, S.J., ARMY CHAPLAIN (1825-1895).

*"Nash, Michael, age 33 years, enrolled in New York City to serve two years, and mustered in as chaplain (6th N. Y. Vol. Inf.), June 5, 1861, mustered out with the regiment, June 25, 1863, at New York City, commissioned chaplain October 25, 1861, with rank from June 5, 1861."*⁴

This is the brief official record of the Rev. Michael A. Nash, S.J., who volunteered as Chaplain of the 6th New York Regiment of Infantry—better

³ Bishop Henni was a fellow native and pupil of Bishop Peter Mirer of St. Gall, Switzerland. On his second visit to St. Gall in the summer of 1862, I had the honor of serving Bishop Henni's Mass in the Cathedral, being at that time a student in the *petit seminaire* of St. Gall.

⁴ **Phisterer**, *New York in the War of the Rebellion*, 3d edition, Vol. ii, p. 1786. Albany, 1912.